

22 9, 22

126



Shelf No

22902126



GIVEN BY

University of Michigan
May 19, 1896.

University of Michigan.

THE RELATIONS OF THE STATE
UNIVERSITY TO RELIGION.

*An Address delivered before the Graduating Classes, on
Sunday Evening, June 26, 1887, at the Semi-
Centennial of the University.*

BY

HENRY SIMMONS FRIEZE, LL. D.



University of Michigan.

THE RELATIONS OF THE STATE
UNIVERSITY TO RELIGION.

3.258 . 126

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE GRADUATING
CLASSES, ON SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 26, 1887,
AT THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL OF
THE UNIVERSITY.

BY

HENRY SIMMONS FRIEZE, LL. D.

Received of the University of Michigan
Library
June 26, 1887
for the Semi-Centennial of the University

ANN ARBOR:
PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY.

1888.

University of Michigan
Library
1917

The Riverside Press, Cambridge :
Printed by H. O. Houghton & Company.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
LIBRARY
1917

THE RELATIONS OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY TO RELIGION.

BY PROFESSOR HENRY S. FRIEZE, LL. D.

IN the year 1837, when Michigan was admitted to the Union, her University was also founded, in accordance with a provision of the new constitution, by the organization of the first Board of Regents; and the diplomas of the University are dated from that year as the first both of the University and of the State. We, therefore, now stand at the close of the first half century of the existence of the University of Michigan; and as we enter upon the celebration of an anniversary so interesting and suggestive, as we look back with gratitude to God for the wonderful prosperity He has given to the State and to all its munificent work of public instruction, we find many fruitful subjects of discourse; but I have chosen the one which seems especially adapted to the opening of our festival, and appropriate to this sacred day, "The University in its Relations to Religion."

The people of Michigan adopted at the first, as a fundamental principle of their state polity, the idea of universal education at the public expense; education not only of the common school, but also in its higher grades, and in all its branches; education in all its breadth and compass, and accessible to all. And this principle, outlined in the constitution and more fully

expressed in legislation, has found an actual organism and embodiment in our system of common schools, in our local high schools, and in the central institutions, including the University, established more directly by the state government. But this plan, so comprehensive, so necessary to a perfect commonwealth, approved by the soundest philosophy, and long ago adopted and followed by the most enlightened nationalities of the world, has met, even here within our own borders, no little opposition and hostility; and this, partly on economical, partly on religious grounds. And so to-day we are compelled to recall the old arguments, to take our stand on the old-fought ground, strengthen, if we can, the old defenses, and repair the old bulwarks. Therefore, as our subject seems to require at this moment the discussion of certain fundamental truths, as well as some account of the religious history and condition of the University, to these I will now ask your attention: —

I. The privileges of education, both in its lower and in its higher grades, are necessary to the stability of a state and the welfare of its people.

II. This education, accessible to all the people in all grades and departments of learning, no agency but the state can perfectly organize and maintain.

III. The institutions of public education, thus indispensable to the existence and well-being of the state, cannot in the nature of things be detrimental to religion and the church.

IV. As a historical fact, the public educational work, and especially the University, have encouraged religion and have been helpful to the church; and we have no just reason to doubt that they will continue

forever to hold the same relations to Christianity in the future as in the past.

I. In the first place, it is almost superfluous to affirm, what is almost universally admitted, that the well-being of every free commonwealth demands that all the people shall be acquainted at least with that part of education which is afforded by the common schools; though, indeed, it is but a few years since this maxim, so just and reasonable, was repudiated by several of the States of our Union, and it was thought necessary to their safety and to their very existence to deny to some millions of their population the opportunity even of learning to read and write.

Pardon me for repeating the truism, necessary to this topic, that the education of the whole people up to this point is required on the one hand by the interests of the state as such, and on the other by those of the people individually and socially. Without this the people cannot be capable of discharging intelligently the duties that devolve upon them as private citizens; those, namely, of nominating and electing to public office, those of local boards and of local self-government, and those of state legislation; and, in short, all duties of citizens which do not require technical and professional attainments. And again, without this the people are not well prepared for the ordinary avocations and industries of life, cannot well secure their individual welfare, and are more liable to become disturbers of the peace and a burden to society.

But while for these reasons it is generally agreed that no child of the state must be allowed to grow up without this elementary discipline, which, indeed, in some countries and states is made compulsory, as it

ought to be everywhere, the grounds for making all the higher and all the technical branches freely accessible to all the people are, in part at least, different. It is apparent at once that those branches which are general, and which we call liberal, cannot be pursued by all, nor even by a majority of the youth; for they cannot give the time necessary to their acquisition, or they have not the inclination, or, perhaps, the gift. The same causes, too, will operate to make the numbers comparatively small of those who seek professional and technical training. But liberal and special studies are not, as in the lower branches, a necessary condition of life in all its duties and avocations; nor do the interests of the state itself demand that all its citizens should possess these higher attainments. And yet, unless in some way the opportunity for the acquirement of them be placed within reach of all the youth of a state, both the public service and the interests of the people individually will suffer detriment; for, without the higher and more special kinds of training, where, in the first place, shall we look for the teachers to conduct the common schools? Where, again, is the state to find those who will be competent to formulate the laws, to discharge the functions of the judiciary, and to operate the whole machinery of the law? where, also, the physicians and teachers to manage the institutions of public charity, and where the men of scientific and technical skill to take charge of public works, explorations, improvements, and those interests more immediately pertaining to the government, and not to be intrusted to untrained hands?

And need I say that the people themselves indi-

vidually require more or less the aid and service of all professions and callings? Every day's experience shows us how much their interests demand, in all the industries of life, information and help from the best educated brains and from the best trained skill; not only the lawyer and the physician, for the protection of rights and property and for the preservation of health and life, but scientific investigators and inventors, to make nature more available, industry more profitable, and life more enjoyable. Therefore the schools of science and of the professions are not to be regarded as superfluous luxuries of civilization, but vital conditions both of a successful government and of a prosperous people.

We must also remember that free access to professional and to all higher learning is the only way of saving it from becoming the privilege of the few. There is in every community, ever increasing with the general intelligence, a number of aspiring minds, seeking after truth partly for its own sake, partly to enlarge the bounds of human knowledge. For this order of minds is demanded the opportunity for the widest range in the highest sphere of investigation; and this is found in the department of a university which is sometimes called the Faculty of Philosophy, but with us, the Faculty of Literature, Science, and the Arts. It is this highest department of educational work which is farthest removed from the appreciation and sympathy of men. Without it, however, we should cease to bring out and develop that class of minds which alone can keep us as a State on a level with the most enlightened states and countries. And, indeed, apart from every other consideration, we

should regard it as a reproach to our civilization, not in some way to secure to the noble aspirations of genius, often found among the poorest of the people, the opportunities for attaining the eminence to which they were destined by Nature herself.

Yet how illogical is the common idea that the abstractions of these higher studies are of no practical value; that they are remote alike from the lower forms of education and from the profitable industries of men! On the contrary, it is from these very heights of investigation, whether in science, in history, in literature, or philosophy, that everything in the lower planes of learning, and everything most progressive in the useful arts, is ultimately derived. Their relation to each other might be compared to that of the rivers to the clouds. The mighty river rolling through valley and plain, proud of all his service to man, may look up with a kind of disdain at the cloud floating, seemingly to no purpose, far up in the sky. If the river-god could only speak, as in classic fable, he might say, "It is I who minister to the wants of men; I move the wheels and the spindles of industry, and carry the products of the field and workshop to the cities below, while you float about in the heaven without aim or use." But the answer would be: "Were it not for me, were I not to gather into my bosom the invisible vapors drawn up from the ocean and the lakes, were I not unceasingly to water the earth and fill the springs and rivulets that swell your branches, where would be the giant forces of your mountain stream, and the din of your machinery, where your broad waters bearing along the commerce of the inland? Soon would your fleet of steamers lie rotting on your

banks, and you would shrink to a thread of water struggling along through the sand and slimy rocks of your dried-up channel." So the class of minds devoted to the highest studies, seeking from the infinite depths of truth newly discovered principles and facts, to be added to the sum of things already known, seem, to most of those who are unconsciously profiting by the results of their researches, to be dreamers of questionable sense; for the multitude, in contact only with the practical results, seeing only the material outcome, the telephone, the electric light, the weather signal, or, in history and literature, the manual, the translation, the book of extracts, discover no possible reason for the existence of those men that dwell in the clouds, and for the costly institutions and apparatus necessary to their success, and the funds necessary to their support.

It is a truth difficult for most men to appreciate that popular education cannot be maintained upon a high or even respectable level where these institutions of the very highest class do not also exist and flourish. But the connection between the extremes is none the less real because it is not seen. And so all these departments and branches form a body, one and inseparable. No member can be taken away without injury at once to itself and to all the others. Or they are like the organism of some vast and complicated machine, all the parts of which are skillfully adjusted to work in harmony and for a common result.

It is clear, then, that education, in its whole range and in all its diversity, must in some way be made accessible to every son and daughter of the state. This the interests of the state as such, and those of the people individually, demand. Without it the citi-

zens are not equal to the duties of self-government; without it the state cannot effectively discharge the functions for which alone a state exists; without it the state cannot hold a place among the most enlightened communities; while the sons of the poor, as gifted as those of the rich, will have no means of reaching the position for which their natures destined them, and education, in the long run, will become the privilege of wealth and rank.

II. We have here, then, a great work to be done, a momentous work, involving one of the vital interests of human society, and one on which depend all the other interests of society and the state. And this leads us to the important question: To what agency shall the work be intrusted? What authority shall plan, direct, sustain it all? For we have surveyed the work itself, in its extent and nature; we have not yet asked by what means, by what hands, it must be organized, maintained, and conducted. Shall there be one agency or many? one head or many? one part weak, another strong? one in operation, another forgotten? We have found it an organic unity, with parts necessary to each other, that must be kept in adjustment to act harmoniously, and to work out the best result. Manifestly this unity demands an agency which is also in itself a unity; one central intelligence, and also one central and supreme authority, to plan, watch, and unify the far-reaching movement of all this vast machinery. We have found that throughout its entire sphere, in all its manifold diversity, it must be made accessible to all; not more to the rich than to the poor and the poorest. All this requires an agency that commands unlimited resources; ever increasing,

too, with the growth of population and the expansion of the educational work. It is manifest that there is but one existing power and authority that can meet these conditions. It is the state and the state alone that can, and therefore must, perform this great duty to itself and to humanity.

Will you leave it to the church? The church, even when at one with itself, and also where it has been the predominant power, has seldom educated its people, has ever left the mass in ignorance, and has never kept pace with science. And when it has been subordinated to the state, as now in Germany, though a part of the state, it has itself, in common with the people, been educated by the state. But when the church is divided as with us, and the state and church must be independent of each other, no one of the religious bodies alone, nor all of them united, if that were possible, could command the resources to do this mighty work. In our older States, where in the early days no comprehensive system was thought of, and where nothing but the common school was supported at the public expense, the higher studies were of necessity provided for by private corporations, by individual enterprise, or by the denominations. Thus arose the old colleges of the East, which have done such a noble work within those limits of advanced learning, half way between the gymnasium and the university, to which either their own policy or their straitened means have generally confined them. But it is a striking illustration of the need of a state system and a central educational authority, that more than two centuries have passed since the first of the old colleges was founded, and that in all the States where they

have so long existed there is nothing that can be properly called a university. Harvard and Yale, Brown and Princeton, still send their graduates to Leipsic and Berlin to study for the university degree. And it is a consequence unfortunate for us, that the example of these venerable institutions had so fixed itself upon the education of the whole country, that when this University of Michigan was to be organized, those to whom that duty was committed, still looking to the East for their authority, very naturally adopted the traditional New England model, which to them was the highest ideal. And hence, with us too, as with a few of the most progressive of the Eastern institutions, the struggle for years has been, and for years must be, to emancipate the University from the thralldom of the ideas and practices of a collegiate or gymnasial organization. And in this very struggle it has found an immense advantage in its connection with a state system of instruction. In the old States there seemed to be no alternative; the denominations were in a manner forced to undertake this enterprise, and they have nobly performed what they took upon themselves both as a duty to society and to the church. But at the same time, their example serves to prove that the entire work even of the higher education alone cannot be maintained by the churches, much less the education of a State in its whole compass.

Again, it might be asked, could not that class of schools which we call professional and technical be taken under the charge of private corporations of a secular character? In such a case, I reply, even though here and there the benevolence of the rich might found such schools on ample endowments, the

great majority would lead a precarious existence, necessitated to bid for patronage and numbers by lowering the conditions of entrance and making easy terms for diplomas; and so bringing our professions into questionable repute. Every one knows what illustrations are afforded of this tendency in the actual history of a multitude of private professional institutions.

But besides the dependence, the insecurity, the inadequacy, and the necessary imperfection of collegiate, professional, and technical schools maintained by private corporations, whether denominational or secular, they also must fail to meet the last condition I mentioned as essential to the completeness of the educational work. For the want of the unlimited resources which only states can command, the institutions so maintained, being dependent chiefly upon fees and tuition, are generally too expensive for the children of the poor. In spite of funds in some few of them for free scholarships, they can never, as a rule, supply that condition which is indispensable to a people that would be substantially equal,—that would secure an equal opportunity to every one of making the most of his God-given nature. They tend necessarily in the long run to make these higher spheres of learning, and the occupations to which they open the way, the privileges of wealth and rank, and so to widen more and more the breach between riches and poverty, and so also to render more impossible that gradual process of intellectual levelling which, more than anything else, can bring an end to the long, historic, and almost hopeless war between capital and labor. The poor man, the poor man's son and daughter, have no more

dangerous enemy, no foe more sure to rob them of all chance of improving their condition, than the short-sighted politician who declaims against public high schools and state universities. These institutions are emphatically the pathways of the poor towards those higher levels of life to which their talents and their enterprise entitle them. Without keeping them perpetually open, the State and the country would often fail to know and to command the talents of the most gifted children of the land.

A striking example of this is afforded in the history of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Without this national school, with its absolutely free tuition, accessible alike to youth of all conditions, many of our most successful and brilliant soldiers would never have been known to the country and to fame. Without West Point, is it probable that we should have reckoned among our great commanders such men as those who brought the late civil war to a successful close? And are not the services and achievements of those three men alone, to say nothing of a hundred others educated in that school, worth all that West Point has ever cost the country? But I need not go abroad for examples. There was once a poor boy in this State, dwelling in this university town; he was one of the poorest of the poor; by daily toil he worked his way through the collegiate course. That boy's name is now known wherever an astronomer points his telescope to the stars. The fame of James Craig Watson, and the honor he has brought to Michigan, are worth infinitely more to the State than the few dollars it paid for his education. A state cannot afford to stint or cripple these institutions, which

alone can raise up and bring into view the very humblest of its children, and thus bring to the public service, through the sifting process of universal competition and free opportunity, the very best talent latent in all classes of its citizens; for gifts of mind and character depend upon no accident of birth, wealth, or social surroundings.

And, once admitting the truth that all the parts of an educational system, the higher as well as the lower, are alike indispensable to the common welfare, no one should be disturbed at the relatively greater expense of these higher branches of learning. In calculating the cost of our dwellings, we do not feel troubled because some parts of the necessary material and labor are more costly than others. We ask ourselves, not what does this or that thing come to by itself, but what is to be the sum total of the outlay necessary to the solidity and completeness of the building. There is a wide difference in the cost of maintaining the infantry, the artillery, the cavalry, and the staff of an army; but, as no army is complete and efficient without them all, we sum up the expenses of the individual branches of the service, and accept it as the grand total of the amount necessary for the national defence, without regard to the difference between the cost of the infantry, the artillery, and the cavalry, or between the pay of the private soldier and the general officer.

But I will not do wrong to your intelligence by dwelling any longer upon truths so obvious. They lead to the inevitable conclusion that the state must in the very nature of things be the educator of its citizens; and that it must maintain a system, not only

of common schools, but of all education, from the primary school to the university. And I need not say that this principle is fully corroborated by actual history; that as a fact the nations of the world which are most perfectly educated are precisely those whose governments have for generations maintained all the parts of such a comprehensive system.

Therefore the people of Michigan, in establishing and sustaining at the public expense all institutions of learning of every grade and kind, have simply followed the teachings both of sound philosophy and of historical experience. In doing this they have made the work of universal education a part of the life and being of the State itself. Therefore it must forever fulfil this sacred trust. It can leave no part of it to other hands. As justly might it delegate to some private agency any other part of its functions, as any part of its educational system; as properly consign its financial affairs to a syndicate of bankers, as leave its educational work, or any part of it, to private corporations of any kind.

But this duty which a state owes to itself of leaving no part of the educational work unprovided for, and of abandoning none of its interests to the beneficence and enterprise of private corporations, by no means interferes with the liberty of such agencies to expend their funds, however unnecessarily, if they so choose, in duplicating any or every institution of the public educational system. How this can be done with the least disadvantage I shall indicate farther on in referring to the example of the Methodist denomination in Canada.¹ To leave no public interest uncared for, and

¹ See pages 32, 33.

to forbid private parties to care for such interests, are not identical and interchangeable propositions. A father possessed of means for the support of his children has no right to leave them to the charity of others; but he does not thereby prohibit any who may feel so disposed from bestowing their wealth upon them. The only question is, whether that wealth could not be more wisely bestowed. Switzerland, for example, leaves no part of education unprovided for, no part to the care of private parties; but it by no means prohibits the maintenance of private schools of learning.

III. It was to be expected that all intelligent citizens would accept even with pride and gratitude a feature of our State constitution so reasonable, just, and necessary, and so much in advance of anything in the organism of the older States. Yet, as I said at the beginning, there are not a few amongst us who are either ignorant of our home traditions, or who, for their own reasons, see fit to reject them; while they favor movements which are prejudicial to the interests, either of the entire system of our public education, or to some particular part of it, and especially to the University. Happily, however, the under-current of established things, moving quietly but persistently and with mighty power, always directed and impelled by the good sense, the common sense, of the people, pursues its calm course, quite undisturbed by the fanaticism frothing and foaming about here and there on the surface. But as this hostility is based on the charge, or rather the assumption, that state institutions, where church and state cannot be united, must necessarily be irreligious, the concluding part of my dis-

course must be devoted to the inquiry to which all has tended, — what are the relations of the university, or, what is the same thing, of the state educational institutions, to religion and the church.

In the first place, nothing can be more irrational than the assumption that the educational institutions of a state are necessarily irreligious or atheistic. God cannot have ordained two great institutions for the benefit of man, to exist and work forever side by side, and at the same time to be incompatible and mutually destructive. In that case the assumption that both are necessary to society must be false, and one of them must be abolished. If the state cannot exist without educating its citizens, and if this education is necessarily hostile to religion and Christianity, then the Christian must contend for the overthrow of the state itself; or, if the citizen thinks the state more essential to man than the church, and that the latter is inimical to the state and to its characteristic institutions, then must he fight against Christianity. But no one can listen for a moment to a hypothesis so monstrous. The state is here with all its institutions of hard-won civilization; the church is here with the gracious offices of the Gospel, sadly split up, indeed, yet held together by a spiritual if not external unity. Both are ordained by the same Creator for the well-being of man.

The commonwealth, the republic, the sovereignty of the people, the state, whatever you may call it; on the other hand, the church of Christ, the citizenship of God, the *civitas Dei*, or spiritual commonwealth, — these two institutions, both fitted by their organization and nature, and designed by Providence, to embrace

the whole world, how can they be foes? Both designed for the welfare of the same humanity and the same society, how can they be incompatible? The one developed and constituted by the Providence of God, the other ordained and founded by the Word of God, how can they be in collision? These two things, the most beneficent, the noblest, the grandest, that have emanated from the wisdom of the great Creator, offspring of the same Divine thought, of the same Divine benevolence, by what possibility can they ever be mutually antagonistic and destructive?

How, then, does it happen that we do sometimes find them in actual conflict; in their history, each at times oppressing the other, estranged one from the other, and each striving to win the advantage? Now, whenever this has happened, the cause has been that one has overstepped its proper bounds, and trespassed on the jurisdiction of the other. When a civil government undertakes to control the work, the offices, and the teaching of the church, it interferes with the liberties of its own people, and with their rights of conscience, and there is persecution, and not infrequently bloodshed. When, on the other hand, the church has attempted to override the state, and has claimed for itself the temporal as well as the spiritual power, then both the state and the people have sunk into that most degrading of all slavery, that spiritual domination which can only be thrown off by resistance, even to revolution and sometimes to bloodshed. But such things, we hope, now belong to the past. A republican commonwealth such as ours, which aims to reach the ideal of the philosophical statesman, with a clear apprehension of all the duties it owes to its

people, and of the limits of its power, can never invade the spiritual domain of the religious bodies that make up the church within its borders; while the latter will not consciously and deliberately do aught to prejudice the interests of the state in its own proper sphere of action. Both, so far as they are patterned, the one after the ideal state, and the other after the type of the Gospel, must, as I have said, be incapable of hostility and collision. If there exist, therefore, any differences of interest between the institutions of education and the religious bodies within our borders, they must be due either to some error in our constitution and legislation, or else in the action and management of these bodies. As to the former, I think I may claim to have proved the legislation of the State to be absolutely right and wise. As to the latter, I must candidly say that errors have been committed, though in general they are undoubtedly errors that in the condition of the State and of the churches in our early days, and in their misapprehension of the full significance of the educational plan of the State, were quite natural and inevitable; and for these errors, whatever they may have been, no one can justly be blamed.

They come under the head of what I may call accidents of history. I refer, of course, to what I must always look upon as the mistaken policy of committing several of the religious denominations to the support of institutions chiefly for that secular education which the State has engaged itself by the most sacred obligation to provide at the public expense. That it was absolutely unnecessary needs no argument now; but in those pioneer days the fact was not so apparent.

The idea of the higher education supported by the state was unfamiliar: it was therefore regarded as impracticable. As to the University itself, it was then scarcely visible; a mere college, and quite insignificant at that. No one dreamed that it was destined to be a solid institution of large dimensions. Meantime the great interests of religion in these newly opened regions seemed to demand collegiate schools like those of the East. No doubt some were tempted to the enterprise by selfish considerations, but many good men were actuated by the best motives. Accordingly the funds, more or less inadequate, were raised, and the denominational colleges were organized. Once established, their founders were committed to their support; and the result, so far as regards their relation and attitude towards the State institutions, was inevitable: it must of necessity be one of more or less rivalry.

The new colleges were born, and that which is born is bound to make a struggle for existence. No matter how it gets a living, the living must be had. In well-educated nations one university is enough, and more than enough, for every two millions of population. Michigan, when the University was established, had scarcely one fourth of that number. Yet at least six colleges were founded at about the same period to duplicate the work of the State University. The colleges must prove their right to exist; and the ground must evidently be that the University was not needed, and had no such right. It was a matter of life and death; the proof, whether valid or not, must be found; and it could neither be conceived of, nor found anywhere but in the charge of irreligion and immorality.

The State cannot teach any one form of religion, or countenance any one denomination of the church: therefore it can teach or countenance no religion at all; therefore its University must by inference be atheistic: therefore it is atheistic; and therefore it is a solemn duty to inform the world through the pulpit, the denominational press, and the college circulars that the University is opposed to Christianity. Resolutions advertising these allegations were from time to time introduced into religious bodies, and chiefly advocated by the members who had lately come from other States, and sometimes by visitors from abroad; but, through the influence of the wise and prudent, they were not always adopted. Between the lines of all such resolutions could always be easily read the true purport: Do not resort to the State institutions; come to us; we must have your support or perish.

As an illustration of strictures of this kind to which in our past history we have been occasionally subjected, I will mention the resolutions passed by a denominational convention at about the middle period of the administration of President Tappan; containing statements, indeed, so manifestly unjust, that the Regents, for the first and the last time in the case of such charges, thought it their duty to take public notice of them. From the report of the literary Faculty embodied by the Regents in their public reply to these resolutions, the following words afford an answer to the stereotyped charges of the same nature, repeated from time to time in the past, and, from the working of the same causes, likely to be repeated in the future: "While, in common with the Faculties of all colleges and universities, we have frequent occasion

to admonish the young men intrusted to our tuition, and sometimes find ourselves forced to the more unpleasant duty of extreme measures; while also we are ready to acknowledge and deplore our want of perfection both as instructors and as men professing the Christian religion, — we cannot refrain from expressing the conviction — a conviction founded upon considerable experience as instructors, and upon intimate acquaintance with other seminaries of learning — that there exists in general among the students of the University of Michigan a more virtuous sentiment and a higher tone of moral feeling than we have ever witnessed elsewhere; that the proportion of youth whose impulses are wayward and vicious is unusually limited; and that, in addition to youth of irreproachable character and sterling integrity who have not become members of any Christian church, there has ever been among us a very considerable number, we may with devout thankfulness add an increasing number, who furnish the most conclusive and gratifying evidence of active Christian piety. Finally, we are constrained to say, that, if any persons or class of persons have conceived an unfavorable opinion of the University as a place of education for Christian youth, with sincere deference to the persons who entertain this opinion, and with the fullest conviction that they would do us no wilful injustice, it is our conviction that such an opinion must either be founded on an incorrect apprehension of the facts, or else upon too limited a comparison with other institutions of learning." The resolutions to which this answer was given, as I said, are not unlikely to be repeated. The material will always exist, partly in the assumption before men-

tioned, that a State university must necessarily be atheistic ; partly in the fact that the members of college Faculties are not all saints ; partly in that which always has been and always will be, as long as universities exist, that, among some hundreds of college students, there will always be some rogues. But the leaving out of all colleges and universities, and the singling out of a State university as if it were a peculiar and anomalous example of collegiate sin and depravity, manifests either the ignorance or disingenuousness of the authors of such accusations.

But men are ever inventive in the discovery, under peculiar incentives, of that which they desire to discover. Not many years after the solemn charges above mentioned were formulated and published, the University was attacked from a precisely opposite quarter. It was too religious, it was positively "sectarian;" this was the very term employed, and on this occasion the accusation was brought before the State legislature itself: the University, from this new point of view, was not only not atheistic, but it was outrageously religious. It was violating, by the positive character of its religious teaching, the rights and tender consciences of some who believed in no religion at all.

Thus the opposite parties were firing as it were over the beleaguered University into each other's camp, and leaving this poor victim of two assailants, hostile at once to it and to each other, unharmed by the explosives hurled from either side. I look back upon these things now as having more in them of the ludicrous than of the serious. From these counter-attacks, however, the truth is easily inferred that both assailants were in the wrong, and that the University

stood where a university representing a Christian commonwealth ought to stand, and, moreover, that it stands practically where all universities, whether state or denominational, do actually stand.

The following words of the legislative committee, appointed to investigate the grounds of this last accusation, completely justify our position: "The teachings of the University are those of a liberal and enlightened Christianity, in the general, highest, and best use of the term. This is not, in our opinion, sectarian. If it is, we would not have it changed. A school, a society, a nation, devoid of Christianity, is not a pleasant spectacle to contemplate. We cannot believe the people of Michigan would denude this great University of its fair, liberal, and honorable Christian character, as it exists to-day." These noble words of the representatives of the State express with perfect clearness and truth the position in regard to religion which the University ought to maintain as a representative institution of what will never cease to be a Christian state. They completely vindicate its character as at once Christian and liberal. They ought to have been engraved on a tablet of brass and placed in our chapel, where they could forever give answer to all extremists who assail us from either side. And they also may be taken as a fitting introduction to my closing topic, — that public or state education by no means excludes religious influences and practices; nor, in a certain way, even the teaching of religion; and that in fact this University has ever been helpful to religion and the church, and must continue to be so hereafter.

IV. There is, indeed, great misapprehension as to the true distinction between religious and secular in-

struction. Strictly speaking, there are few religious schools in existence excepting the monasteries and nunneries of the papal church; for these have been established for the simple purpose of cultivating in their votaries sentiments, exercises, and practices of religion. Apart from these, the only religious school of the world is the church itself, with its Divine authority, its practical religious teaching, and its religious culture. The confusion on this subject arises largely, or perhaps altogether, from the fact that so many of our educational institutions are attached to the religious denominations. It is taken for granted, especially by the uninitiated, that this connection is proof of a special religious character. No doubt some of these combine together specific doctrinal teaching, the inculcating of dogmatic beliefs and of devotional forms, with what is strictly secular; but as an almost universal fact these institutions are simply schools of secular learning, in substance, form, and spirit hardly to be distinguished from those which are sustained and directed by public authority. We do not think of Princeton, Yale, Brown, or Columbia as religious colleges. Their designation, to denote with precision their character, should be, denominational schools of secular learning.

As evidence of this fact, so familiar to all of us who have passed through such institutions, I might describe in detail their courses of study, which are essentially the same in all: but instead of this, I will take the liberty of recalling my own personal experience in one of the noblest and best of all the venerable colleges of the East; not indeed one of the largest, but second to none in its reputation, through its whole

history, for the ability of its Faculty, and for the attainments, the influence, and the fame of those who have in different generations come forth from its halls. No college of New England was conducted more perfectly in accordance with the views entertained by the leading educators of the times as to the discipline which a denominational college should impart. The studies at that period were those only which are prerequisite to the bachelor's degree in arts, — the ancient languages, the mathematics, natural sciences, rhetoric, logic, and the several divisions of philosophy. The modern languages, history, and applied sciences had not yet been introduced. There was, of course, in these studies, no opportunity for any direct or official teaching of religion. In connection with "Butler's Analogy," which formed part of the philosophical course, and occasionally in connection with other studies, there were free discussions on religious truths or doctrines suggested by the topics of instruction.

There was no official recognition of religion excepting the one requirement that all students should attend the daily devotions conducted by the President in the college chapel. Nor, from anything in the lectures and teachings of the President and Faculty, or in the religious exercises of the chapel, would it have been possible to know that this institution pertained to any one of the religious orders rather than to another. In fact in all colleges of this class it was the custom, dictated at once by expediency and by common sense, to leave out of view all appearance of any denominational connection. And yet it would be a great mistake to infer, because of the absence of any official and dogmatic teaching of religion, that this col-

lege had no practical religious life. On the contrary, in common with the whole sisterhood of New England colleges, it was at all times the home of earnest and effective religious activity; but this was of that kind which is ever most fruitful, because most in keeping with the spirit and method of the Gospel itself: it was the spontaneous movement of the students themselves, inspired by Christian earnestness, and countenanced by the favor and sympathy of the President and the religious members of the Faculty. And neither in this nor in any other institution of its class has the status of religion, such as I have described it, been essentially changed. The denominational college is simply a school of secular education, controlled by a corporation of religious men, either exclusively or chiefly belonging to some particular order of Christians, while its character and culture on the side of religion depend on the personal influence of Christian professors and students and their voluntary associations.

Now every one who has been either an officer or a student of the University of Michigan at any period of its history, from the time when the sainted Williams organized its first classes to this day of its semi-centennial festival, knows very well that every word I have said of the religious traditions, the religious tone and spirit, of this New England college, is absolutely true of our own University. From the beginning it has had its voluntary religious organization, at first under the title of the Society of Missionary Inquiry, and later under that of the Students' Christian Association; and the members of individual classes, also, have had their social religious meetings, and, still more than this, the officers of the institution have, often

delivered public discourses of a religious character before the students and Faculties voluntarily assembled. At the same time, I venture to say, in no school of learning, whether denominational or not, has the free and earnest discussion of topics of religious doctrine, morality, and history been more constantly encouraged and maintained than by the members of our Academic Faculty. The University has left, of course, like all the typical colleges to which I have referred, the official, authoritative, and hortatory inculcation of religion to the pulpit, to which exclusively this sacred duty has been given. It has a right, it is its duty, to foster in its students the habit of thorough research into all questions and topics of philosophy, the doctrines, the history, and the philology of religion, whether Christian or pagan, whether Mohanmedan or Brahminical.

And to say that the University, because it is a State University, cannot do this, is to deprive it of that which is the very life of a university, — absolute freedom of investigation in every field of human thought and experience, and in the whole limitless world of nature. Even a school of theology, if it be worthy of its name, must have all this liberty; even there, no ingenuous youth can be properly and wisely shut off from the inquiry into the historic grounds of belief, into the philosophy of theism, into received interpretations of the sacred writings: a theological school of any character must be, in part at least, a philosophical and a scientific school, and therefore not inaptly it forms a department of all the great universities of the Old World.

And just here we may again encounter an objection

of our rationalistic friends, who, perhaps, will now say : " You are justifying our former accusation ; you are, after all, not indeed by countenancing voluntary religious activity, but by allowing instruction in the Christian faith, infringing upon our rights of conscience." But no ; we do not give instruction from the chair as preachers of religion from the pulpit. We present it in its different forms and phases as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of historical phenomena ; as a subject which claims as much thoughtful attention and study, investigation and discussion, as the observed facts or phenomena of astronomy or geology. Some one may still believe in the system of Ptolemy, and deny that of Copernicus. Will this scientific sceptic complain that his civil rights are violated because our astronomer at the University clearly sets forth to the best of his judgment the doctrines of Copernicus, and compares them at the same time with those of Ptolemy ? And will he take us to task if the weight of evidence should go to show that the earth does move ? The professor of philosophy and the professor of history must deal largely with Christianity and with all religions ; either this, or abandon their work altogether. Without it their chairs are nothing ; without it, I could almost say, a university is nothing. For take away from history all consideration of the religious and Christian movements of the world, and hardly anything of history is left ; and shut off from philosophy the discussion of the momentous questions and various theories of religion that have filled the minds of ancient and modern thinkers, and no professor of philosophy will think his chair worth holding. Freedom, I say, freedom of thought, research, is the very essence

of all university life and work, and the condition of all university progress. In the exercise of this intellectual liberty, whatever be the subject of instruction, whether science, history, criticism, or religion and morals, we violate no interest of religion and the church, no rights of the private citizen.

But one thing in this comparison, regarded by some as throwing suspicion on the religious character of the University, I must not leave unmentioned. And it is the one particular in which there is any marked difference in religious usages between us and the denominational schools. About fourteen years ago the attendance of our academic or literary department at the chapel service or morning prayers was made to depend on the feeling and will of the students. The continental universities of Europe have no public religious exercises, though all of them contain theological Faculties. The same is true of the English universities in their character of universities. It is only in the dormitories at Oxford and Cambridge called colleges, that is, the separate residences and college homes of the students, that they are assembled daily like families to a kind of domestic worship; a custom in such circumstances altogether sensible and practicable. The colleges first founded in the American colonies and States, with a like system of domestication of the students, very naturally adopted the same practice, and handed it down to all our colleges. The students dwelt together in the so-called "dormitories," and the whole body of classes and sections attended lectures or recitations uniformly three times daily at the same hours, with clock-work precision, beginning immediately after chapel exercises in the morning. Attendance at

chapel, therefore, was but the introductory exercise from which all moved directly to the lecture rooms.

But in the case of a university like our own, in which, without dormitories, all students of all departments alike, whether literary or professional, are dispersed like those of German universities over the whole area of the town, in which also multiplicity of studies, necessitated by the times and by larger development, breaks up the ancient class system and the simple uniformity of recitation hours, compulsory attendance upon these exercises became impracticable and unreasonable; and, as is often the case, when an old usage is first called to account, several other just grounds were now presented. Why make this exercise compulsory on the literary students, and not on the whole? Then, again, it began to be felt that any official requirement of this kind was hardly compatible either with the free manhood of a university, or with the rights of citizens. And what moral good, after all, could grown-up men and women be expected to derive from the forced observance of religious worship? Would they be likely to grow in piety if required by a like compulsion to be present at the public services of the church? And accordingly, while the devotional exercises were by no means abolished, attendance upon them was left to the students themselves, and those of all departments were invited to participate.

But the real religious life of the University, that which here, as in all universities, is independent of anything official and formal, has suffered no detriment whatever from this innovation on the traditional usage. As I have said, and as college men very well know,

that life is found chiefly in the spontaneous activity of the Christian students. And never in the whole history of the Students' Christian Association in this University has this activity been so great and so fruitful as in these very years of freedom in respect to public worship. No one would pretend that the two things have any connection of cause and effect. The fact simply proves that no harm has been done to religion. And I must say here, that never before has this association of faithful Christian workers felt so much the need of more ample accommodations for their meetings and various exercises. After the earnest appeals for aid that have recently been made to the Christian communities of the State, we may hope that the new building proposed for this association may soon be secured. Certainly an enterprise for the advancement of religious interests in the University, carried on by young men and women who are members of the various denominations, and who with the Faculties have contributed, even beyond their means, to the fund for the erection of this building, should receive help and countenance from all those good people who express so much concern for the religious welfare of the University. Certainly these young Christians, devoted to this work, which is in some sense a missionary work, have reason to expect as much sympathy and encouragement as those who labor in the missions of Asia and Africa; not a few of whom, indeed, have gone forth, and are continually going forth, from this same Christian Association of the University of Michigan.

In these remarks I have endeavored to show that the position taken by this University in its past history on the question of religion is substantially that which

is held by all universities, is perfectly in keeping with its duty to the State, and is deserving of no reproach either from the friends or the opponents of Christianity. If by its very existence under the constitution it has been the occasion of jealousies giving rise to occasional misrepresentations, for this it is no more responsible than the State to which it owes its being.

In its future it must be expected to maintain the same position as heretofore. Until Michigan shall cease to be a Christian State its University cannot cease to be a Christian school of learning, for it is governed and controlled by the people through Regents of their own choosing; and, therefore, its teachers must in general represent the religious opinion of the people as a whole. But to believe that Christianity is ever to lose its ground in the State is to throw up our faith in its Divine Author. On the contrary, his word cannot fail; his good work must go on and prosper; the people must become more and more imbued with his spirit, and make that spirit to be more and more manifest in the character and working of their institutions. And we have in this a sure promise that the University will never cease in the future to maintain that reasonable and strong position, as a Christian institution of a Christian commonwealth, which as a historical fact it has held throughout the half century this day completed.

What we need is, not the perpetual severance of the forces of the higher education, but their complete local concentration, union, and coöperation. There is at this moment in the Canadian Province of Ontario a great enterprise in progress which is destined to place her schools of higher learning among the foremost on

this continent. It contemplates nothing less than the removal of all the denominational colleges from their present localities to the seat of the provincial, or, as we should call it, the state university of Toronto. This movement towards confederation has in fact been already initiated by the powerful denomination of the Methodists. At their last general conference, after long and earnest deliberation, that body resolved to transfer to that capital their college, long ago established at Coburg, and to make it the first in the crown of colleges which, in union with the university, shall make Toronto in time another Leipsic or Berlin. As a brief expression of the wisdom and importance of this bold step, I quote the following words of Dr. Withrow, a distinguished member of the conference: "By this act the educational policy of the Methodist Church undergoes a great change, and we believe will receive a new impulse and a wider development on a higher plane. It no longer holds itself aloof as a denominational college, but enters into intimate association with the national university in the endeavor to develop one of the broadest and best equipped institutions of higher learning on the continent. Its students will meet and mingle with those of the other churches, and in the intimate association of college life will cultivate broader sympathies and more genial fellowship. The friends of education anticipate for it an eminent success in unsealing fountains of liberality hitherto unknown, and in greatly promoting the interests of higher education by surrounding with an atmosphere of religious sympathy and coöperation the central university."

This act of the Methodist Church of Canada, so full

of significance, is also, under the circumstances, even grand and magnanimous; a remarkable victory over natural prejudice and present interest in favor of sound wisdom, and the great and true interests of the long future; suggesting to us also a thought, a dream, a longing, which we scarcely dare to cherish.

Is it in the possibilities of the future of this good State of Michigan that all the educational funds of private corporations, now dispersed here and there within our territory among institutions doing, or aiming to do, precisely the same work, can be gathered together into one locality, where all may have access to all the privileges so munificently provided by the State, while each, like the colleges of Oxford, retains its own autonomy, and its own internal government; where every dollar expended by every individual corporation will be spent for some good end, yielding its full value; where the interests of all will be identified in a general unity of purpose, and the prosperity and strength of each will contribute to the success of all the rest? It would not be a group of colleges built up around a central institution, as at the English universities, to become like them the citadel of strength to one particular branch of the church; but it would be the concentration of all the educational forces of the Christian bodies of every name around the University, to increase its power for good, while doubly increasing their own, and while conspiring to make what is now a great centre of public education a centre and seat of Christian influence, the power of which would make itself felt in the State and the world as long as the State shall last. These forces might in time, it is true, be employed largely and

chiefly in the teaching of theology, and in raising up a home ministry of the Gospel: but, of all things that can be achieved by institutions of Christian benevolence, what is more to be longed and prayed for by Christian men than theological schools of our own here at home; seminaries to rear up in the very midst of our own population, destined in no distant future to number its millions, a body of ministers of enlarged spirit, acquainted with the customs of our own people, acquainted with our own institutions, accepting them, loving them, proud of them? Such a ministry, habituated in youth to kindly intercourse, though members of different communions, and liberalized by the free interchange of ideas and by the large atmosphere of a university, is precisely that which the divided church requires to make it one with itself, to make it also one with the people; to give the church, at least spiritually united, a real and an ever-advancing power in the whole commonwealth and in the whole Northwest.

And is all this but a magnificent vision? Can the monarchical states of Germany, can France, in the midst of all her revolutions and political fluctuations, can the little republic of Switzerland, and even a province of the British Empire, do such grand things; and must they be impossible for a free State of America? Would to God that with us, too, such glorious things might come to pass! would that our dream might be prophecy!

And for you who now go forth from these halls to take the places which Providence shall have allotted to you in active life, for this goodly company, all buoyant with youth and hope and enterprise, the University this day has kindly words of parting. A singular

interest attaches to you as the graduates of this semi-centennial year. Whatever the University has attained in excellence of discipline, in this half hundred years, may fairly be expected to manifest itself in the life-work and conduct of those who at this time go into the world imbued with her principles, equipped with her instructions, and sealed with her diploma. And yet you need no words of mine at this inspiring moment to kindle in your souls the ambition and the resolve to acquit yourselves in all the pathways and duties of your lives in a manner that shall be at once honorable to you and to the University, and worthy of your part in this great day of her history. You feel and will always feel, I doubt not, that your responsibility as men and women is greatly, I might say immensely, enhanced by the high privileges, the golden opportunities, that you have here enjoyed. Nothing short of the very best that you have here become capable of doing will satisfy either your own consciences or your debt to this institution, and to the State which has created it. As you move onward in your various careers, meeting and overcoming the obstacles and trials allotted in common to us all, you will find, what all of us before you have found, that the discipline and training of collegiate and professional schools secure the best possible preparation for conquering difficulties and winning success; more and more you will feel that your best and most helpful friends and counsellors are those instructors with whom you have spent these early years; who have learned to take a sincere interest in your welfare, and who from these calm and secluded heights of thought will still watch your progress, still keep you

in view, though seemingly lost to sight in the distant mazy crowds of towns and cities. Our best wishes, hopes, and prayers will ever follow you.

Be students still in straightforward truth, in manly courage and freedom, and above all things strive to keep a place in your hearts for faith : faith in God and immortality ; faith in the final triumph of truth and righteousness. Do not think that faith is the weak resort of the credulous alone. The knowledge of second causes makes men proud and sometimes blind. Faith, at last, is the only stronghold of the wisest as well as of the most simple. Faith is not contrary to reason, is not the foe of science ; it only goes before them, grasping things beyond their reach. The deepest insight, the minutest analysis, even to the division and solution of the most subtle elements of matter, leave us just as far as ever from the knowledge of their substance and their ultimate source. No power of observation, no skill of experiment, no reach of inference, can ever diminish by a hair's breadth the gulf that separates material phenomena from absolute being ; the evanescent from the everlasting, this mortal life from immortality : only white-winged Faith can fly across that chasm. We must have faith ; no man, not the proudest that mocks at the credulity of faith, can himself live a moment without it. Something we must take upon its authority ; the alternative is this : shall our faith reach out to God, take hold of God, or shall it put that greater strain on reason, and assert that there is no God, or immortality, and for us no future but blank annihilation ? Plunge not into that alternative of despair. Rather cherish the faith and the cheering hopes of the Christian. May this be with you, young

friends, the principle to give you guidance in conduct, strength in trial, support in misfortune, solace in grief, and peace at the last.

And just as some to-day, silvered with age, look back along the vista of our first half century, and call to mind the first planting of that tree which now stands glorious in height and strength and beauty, so may you look back from that centennial day of 1937, and so survey with gratitude and rejoicing the history of a hundred years ; a century of successful struggles, dangers triumphed over, grand achievement ; sending forth from all these schools successive generations, multitudes of youth, both rich and poor, natives of the State, natives of the land, natives of distant lands ; all made the happier, more useful to themselves and to the world, for being here ; all conspiring to give the University and the State a name not to be estimated in gold and silver ! And on that day, this youthful band that leaves us now, who shall be then the silver-haired alumni of 1937, will talk with pride of Alma Mater, and rejoice in her prosperity ; and give, perchance, some kindly thoughts to us who cannot see that distant day, for our poor mortal nature longs to be remembered. And then, as now, shall these old halls behold another host like this she sees to-day, with speech and song and shouts of joy bearing filial greetings to this shrine of love and duty ; singing, as we do now, hymns of praise and gratitude to God, who moved the fathers of the State to found this home of learning, the brightest jewel in the crown of Michigan.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 05987 589 6

